

DUXBURY  
BEACH

# Duxbury Stand At Hearing Impresses Legislative Committee

More Than 300 Appear At  
Gardner Auditorium

Duxbury was never so united. More than 300 residents crowded into the Gardner Auditorium in the State House last Thursday to voice their opposition to the proposed bill that would make Duxbury a public resort area. Town Moderator William T. McCarthy, chairman of the Protest Committee, presented the legislative committee on harbors and public lands a petition signed by 1165 Duxbury residents. The forceful and sometimes brilliant arguments against the taking of Duxbury Beach which were made by the speakers impressed the legislative committee.

Reminding the legislators that the protest meeting was the 175th anniversary of the Battle of Concord and Lexington, Mr. McCarthy said Duxbury would put up the same united front against State intervention as the people of Lexington and Concord had when a remote government tried to dictate to them. He then pointed out that the increase in our population from about 2,500 during the winter to almost 9,000 during the summer was already taxing our facilities. "This shows we are already in the recreation business," he told the committee. "We welcome people to Duxbury because recreation is our chief business and has been since the ship-building era ended."

Mr. McCarthy further pointed out that merely because the State now owns only 17 of the 900 miles of usable beaches, it would be wrong to assume that many more miles are not already being used. Many beaches owned by towns and cities are, like Duxbury's, available to the public. "And there are a great many areas left," he said, "where the State could go without destroying built-up values. Why not create values elsewhere instead of destroying those already in existence?"

Mr. McCarthy took a good-natured rap at Rep. James A. Burke (D.,

"I was the mythical man Burke was looking for," McCarthy said. "I started working when I was 11, and my father started at the age of eight, when he came here from Ireland. I am one of the landed gentry, too, but my property is still owned by the mortgage company."

Rep. Nathaniel Tilden (R. Scituate) lashed out at Burke's remarks, branding them "the most despicable I have ever heard." The tremendous cost of the project under consideration by the State was his theme. Mr. Percy Walker cited the traffic problems that would be caused by the narrowness of Duxbury's streets. "The alternative," he said, "would be to widen the streets and cut down the trees. This would be disastrous. As a historically beautiful community, Duxbury would be ruined."

"Millions of dollars are being brought to Massachusetts and New England by out-of-state families who buy and rent houses here. Many of them prefer the privacy and charm of places like Duxbury rather than the more active resorts. If the State built a three or four-lane highway on the crest of Duxbury Beach, any concessions along the highway would be under water part of the time. Obviously, the concessions would move onto the town streets instead."

Senator Sumner G. Whittier (R. Everett) called Salisbury Beach a disgrace as it has been managed by the State. He suggested that Provincetown be developed rather than Crane's Beach or Duxbury Beach. As written, he said, the bill would empower the Recreation Authority to take the "rose bush in my backyard." He added that the Authority was part of a plan of "government by the Democratic bulldozer out of Boston."

In one of the most effective speeches of the session Thomas Herrick, Jr., said "there were darn few provincial aristocrats in Duxbury." Speaking in a homespun, down-to-earth manner, he had the

terest of the public they serve, often are apt to overextend themselves in just the opposite direction."

Mr. Frederick T. Pratt, trustee of the Duxbury Beach Association which bought the beach in 1919 to avoid the possibility of its being exploited, said that for more than 30 years the Association had owned the beach and had kept it open in its natural state for the service of the public. "There are two main points to the problem," he said:

1) Is Duxbury Beach suitable for intensive development to serve large numbers of people?

2) If not, is adequate service to the public being provided to the full extent of the physical limitations?"

Mr. Pratt, who is a partner of Colonial Management Associates in Boston, produced a map to illustrate some of the details of the problem. The legislative committee, who gathered around the map, were obviously impressed by what he said, and they broke in repeatedly to ask further questions about the geology of the beach and the condition of approach highways. Mr. Pratt used the map to hammer home the fact that Duxbury Beach is actually a sandspit—narrow, low, storm-swept and with access limited to one end.

He repeated that the public was not barred from Duxbury Beach. He pointed out that until 1931 the only automobile access to the beach was over the rickety, half-mile wooden bridge, and that since there were no parking facilities on the beach itself, cars were parked on the bridge, which caused a fire hazard. "Rather than exclude the public from the beach, Duxbury built a new approach," he said. "The town built a road into the northern end of the beach from the Green Harbor line, and there we constructed a parking space which could accommodate more than 400 cars. This parking space has since often been enlarged, and in 1941 another parking area was made available and a bathhouse was

first hearing that the Duxbury delegation represented the "landed gentry," and were members of the "provincial aristocracy."

the conditions that existed during the nine years he worked at the public parking area at the north end of Duxbury Beach.

"I got acquainted with every person who came to the beach, and since many were regular visitors, I naturally got to know them fairly well. From talking to them I learned how glad they were to come to the beach operated in such a friendly and efficient manner and maintained so neatly, with its natural beauty unspoiled by the noisy and distracting elements so often found at other public beaches. Thousands of these people, who came from Quincy, Brockton, Boston and elsewhere, came because they liked the beach just as it was."

Like other speakers, Herrick said he was in favor of the "spirit" of the bill, but that he feared "sometimes many well-meaning public officials, in trying to do what they sincerely believe is to the best in-

built. It was located so the public could bathe either in the ocean or in the bay. Last year we had 50% more cars than ever before, and to keep up with the public demand we had to enlarge the parking area during the rush season. Yet there were only four days when anyone had to wait to get into the parking space, and some of the delay was caused by traffic congestion on the approach roads. We plan to increase the parking area this summer". Mr. Pratt gave two reasons against the taking of the beach:

- 1) Its physical conformation is such that it cannot be developed to serve a large number of people except at a cost that would be prohibitive, and in no case on a sustaining basis.

- 2) The public, already adequately served at Duxbury Beach, likes the beach the way it is and would be opposed to State operation.

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## DUXBURY STAND

(Continued from page 1)

Chief of Police James J. O'Neil said that any further development of Duxbury Beach would create conditions which our local police would be unable to cope with. He also warned of the inevitable traffic jams on the approach roads, which would require additional police details. Answering a charge made by Alfred B. Keith (R. Quincy) about Duxbury's "Sunday cops," he said no discourtesy had been intended in the past, and that every effort would be made to give visiting motorists every possible consideration in the future.

Another speaker for Duxbury was Roswell F. Phelps, who has lived in the town for 36 years. He recommended that instead of giving up the powers of the parks and recreation division of the Department of Conservation be increased. He further offered an amendment that provided that no private property be taken by eminent domain except with the specific approval of the Legislature after hearings in the area concerned.

Senator Edward C. Brooke, a stable Republican, asked the Commonwealth to convert its wastelands into forests to make wood pulp for local industries in the State. He noted that a development along the lines of Jones Beach in New York might cost \$15,000,000. His argument in brief was that even if the population within reach of Duxbury was as great as that of New York, and even if the highways were as good as those on Long Island, a Jones Beach development at Duxbury could not possibly be self-sustaining.

Other key speakers were Hector Holmes, Mrs. Kenneth Garside, Edwin Noyes, Philip Deane, Walter Prince and James Miller. "Give us home rule," Mr. Miller said. "We'll see that the improvements are made. The State already has Salisbury. Let them develop it."

Representing the "mobsters who want to take their children to the beach," Mrs. Garside expressed the fear that "Duxbury Beach might turn into another Nantasket or Revere," if the State took over. Attorney Robert H. Holt of Stoughton Shore clarified some of the legal aspects of the proposed legislation.

He said the authorities could take anything and pay for it with bonds that might not be worth anything.

The other four ex-officio members would actually be political appointments, also, thus the end result would be that the nine-man Board of Recreation Authority would have the power to talk without representation. In other words, a small political oligarchy would be empowered to tax the citizens of the Commonwealth.

One of the final opponents of the bill was Mr. Edwin M. Noyes, who was requested by the Chairman to confine his remarks to points not covered by previous speakers. Mr. Noyes said the size of the parking place at the end of the bridge was no indication of the actual use of the beach at that particular point. There were no restrictions whatever on the use of the beach itself, and a great many used the bridge as a means of access, with their transportation either parked at the public parking place at the land end of the bridge, or taken elsewhere to return at a later time for those who had been brought over the bridge to the beach. Among these are children from the several Summer Camps, including Camp Wing, Miramar, St. Margaret's and Chappa Challa. Because not all are able to stay at camp for the whole season, the total number able to enjoy the beach is considerable.

Mr. Noyes also brought out the fact that because all the larger camps, (except Chappa Challa) are exempt from local taxation, that in itself represents a substantial indirect contribution to these children by the Town.

With reference to the complaint that the proposed bill would place too much power in the hands of nine men, Mr. Noyes gave figures covering comparative population, assessed valuation, and party enrollment to show that so far as the Commonwealth is concerned, Duxbury is a negligible factor in any matter concerning the whole State; that the proposed bill did not place the power in the hands of nine men, but rather in the hands of a majority of nine.

The same reasoning would place the power of their appointment in the hands of the Governor and a majority of the Council. He also said it was very unlikely that Duxbury would have direct representation in either group, whereas if the power of taking by eminent domain were left with the General Court the Town would at least have representation of its own choice. Mr. Noyes expressed confidence that if this power of taking were left with the Legislature there would be no likelihood of hasty, unpremeditated action and

value. The bonds are apparently to be paid only out of receipts, but the bill before the legislature provides no assurance that such receipts would be sufficient, in which case the bonds probably could not be sold.

"Are State Insurance and Unemployment Compensation bonds to be invested in these Recreation Authority bonds?" he asked. The implied answer is that if the State accepts a moral responsibility and pays them, it would be a devious way of increasing the State's indebtedness without the Legislature's authorized permission.

He made another good point when he said that the Board of Recreation Authority would be, in substance, entirely political, for the Board would consist of nine members, of which five would be appointed by the Governor.

that its problems would receive fair and impartial consideration.

It was a long rugged day (the meeting broke up at 5:30), but there was a general feeling that Duxbury had acquitted itself well in its opposition to the proposed Recreation Authority as it now reads.